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TANKER DECISION COMES UNDER SCRUTINY



As we all know by now, the six-year effort to land the Air Force aerial tanker construction contract officially ended with the February 24 award to rival Boeing and EADS' decision on March 4 not to protest.

To say we are all disappointed is an understatement. In the days and hours leading up to the announcement, there was much optimism that EADS, which had partnered with our area to build the new tanker in Mobile, would ultimately be selected by the Defense Department.

According to press accounts, many analysts, and even some at Boeing itself, felt EADS possessed the upper hand in the final round of the high stakes competition.

The EADS-Alabama team previously won the contest three years ago before Boeing launched a successful challenge, and Boeing made clear it would not hesitate to do so again if it had lost this time.

After the last Boeing protest, the Defense Department dumbed down their requirements for the new refueling aircraft in what many saw as a blatant attempt to sway the competition to the less capable Boeing tanker.

I, for one, have some serious concerns over a tanker selection process that apparently discounts a superior EADS aircraft already being built in favor of a minimalist Boeing design, which has yet to see the light of day. Last week, before a hearing of the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, I asked Defense Secretary

Robert Gates to provide assurances that Boeing will abide by the cost and terms of its bid. I believe Boeing simply bought the contract with a low-ball bid and I sincerely hope our military and taxpayers are not the ultimate losers if Boeing fails to deliver.

Our military needs a new tanker now and EADS already has its KC-45 aircraft in production. Boeing will be held to account for both its low bid and its promise to deliver the new tankers on schedule. Above all, this is more than a contest for local jobs, but also a competition to ensure that America's military inherits a fully capable tanker that meets evolving mission requirements for the next 50 years.

While many questions surrounding this competition remain unanswered, one fact is undisputed. South Alabama has benefited from the attention this world class contest has given our area. Our determination to go toe-to-toe with Boeing in the tanker competition has strengthened the marketability of our region, showcasing the ability of our community to stand behind major economic development projects, while also highlighting the advantages of our skilled workforce, port facilities and abundant resources.

The spotlight will remain bright here at home as we build on the success of existing and new industries like ThyssenKrupp and Austal USA while promoting our strategic location, talented and motivated labor pool and attractive climate.

Ranked Most Conservative in Alabama Delegation

For the second year in a row, a Washington, DC-based political publication has ranked my voting record as the most conservative in the Alabama Congressional delegation.

National Journal released its 2010 Vote Ratings on February 26, scoring every Member of Congress for their roll-call votes on "key economic, social and foreign policy issues."

For the second year in a row, a Washington, DC-based political publication has ranked my voting record as the most conservative in the Alabama Congressional delegation.

My composite voting record was ranked most conservative among the seven Alabama congressmen, and 82nd most conservative overall among the 435 Members of Congress during 2010.

I consider it an honor to be your representative in the U.S. House, and I believe my voting record reflects the views of the majority of South Alabamians who earnestly want their government to protect our rights as citizens without impeding the growth of jobs and our economy.

I appreciate your continued input on legislation before Congress and I welcome your ideas. To find my office addresses and phone numbers, or send me an email, please visit my web site: <http://bonner.house.gov>.

PROMOTING SOUTH ALABAMA'S TOURIST-RELATED ECONOMY IN CONGRESS

I was pleased to be selected as co-chair of the Congressional Travel and Tourism Caucus for the 112th Congress. This new post will allow our state and region to have a greater voice in shaping federal policy affecting a major part of our economy.

South Alabama is home to a wide variety of industries, most recently steel processing and military ship building have added to our economic landscape. As we seek to grow and diversify our area economy, there is no escaping the fact that tourism is and will continue to be a significant part of our livelihood. If you need proof, look to last year's BP oil spill. The ecological disaster in the Gulf also created an economic disaster on shore, driving away nearly one million tourists from South Alabama during the height of the summer season.

As we approach the one-year anniversary of the oil spill, business all across the economic spectrum are still reeling from the loss of tourist dollars last year. Even local governments and school systems have suffered from a decline in tax revenues that tourism helps generate.

According to the Alabama Department of Tourism, tourist and travel spending in Southwest Alabama totaled \$3.2 billion during 2009 – one third of the state's total tourist dollars. The Congressional Travel and Tourism Caucus advocates for legislation promoting the tourism industry and educates other Members of Congress about the importance of tourism to our national economy. The U.S. Travel Association estimates that tourism and travel contribute more than \$700 billion to the national economy and employ more than 7.7 million people.

I look forward to working with Congressional Travel and Tourism Caucus co-chair Rep. Sam Farr, D-California for the next two years in building on the success of our tourism industry while increasing awareness of its vital role in local job creation.



I was recently presented an honorary membership in the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) by Brad Lynn and Lisa Robinson. Headquartered in Alabama, the CAP is a Congressionally-chartered, non-profit corporation that serves as the official civilian auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force. Among CAP's key missions are search and rescue and disaster relief operations as well as youth aerospace education.

Daphne Welcomes Library of Congress Exhibit March 11-12



If you've always wanted to look at the literary treasures of the famed Library of Congress but have not been able to travel to Washington, DC, you will have an opportunity this week to get a taste of what the famous library has to offer.

A Library of Congress traveling exhibition including facsimiles of many of the Library of Congress treasures as well as displays about the library's millions of resources will be visiting the Daphne Public Library March 11 and 12, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Daphne Public Library is located at 2607 U.S. Highway 98 and Whispering Pines Road in Daphne. The traveling exhibit is free of charge and open to the public.

The Library of Congress exhibit is housed aboard an 18-wheel trailer truck which is currently traveling across America, making 60 stops in the Midwest and the South, including two in Alabama. In addition to Daphne this week, the exhibit will be in Gadsden April 1-2.

Visitors enter the exhibit from a central staircase to find several areas of museum-style displays, including computer terminals featuring Library of Congress websites among them, the main site www.loc.gov and the Center for the Book/Literacy Program site www.read.gov; and sites pertaining to U.S. collections, exhibitions and a special site for use by teachers.

The exhibition also outlines the history of the Library, including Thomas Jefferson's role in rebuilding it following the burning of the U.S. Capitol in 1814 by providing his personal book collection to the nation. The exhibition will display facsimiles of such treasures as the 1507 Waldseemüller Map (the first document to use the word "America"); the 1455 Gutenberg Bible; the rough draft of the Declaration of Independence, in Thomas Jefferson's hand with edits by Benjamin Franklin and John Adams; the original 1962 drawings for the comic book that introduced Spiderman to the world; the handwritten manuscript to jazz pioneer Jelly Roll Morton's "Frog-i-More Rag"; and Walt Whitman's poem "Leaves of Grass."

Founded in 1800, the Library of Congress is the nation's oldest federal cultural institution. The Library seeks to spark imagination and creativity and to further human understanding and wisdom by providing access to knowledge through its magnificent collections, programs and exhibitions.

For more information, please contact the Daphne Public Library at 251-621-2818.

House Republicans Continue to Hold the Line on Spending

Last fall, House Republicans unveiled a plan to get the nation back on track after years of uncontrolled federal spending and costly government expansion. Our “Pledge to America” proposed a bold mixture of spending cuts and institutional reforms.

In our effort to make good on our “Pledge”, one of the first orders of business is rolling back current fiscal year (FY) 2011 federal spending by \$100 billion. Admittedly, it is a modest reduction within the context of the overall deficit, but it is a significant beginning.

On February 19, the conservative-led House passed a FY11 spending plan containing \$61 billion in cuts below the FY10 level of funding and \$100 billion below the president’s FY11 budget request to Congress.

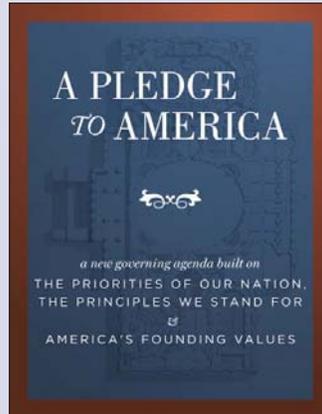
While we kept our promise, we also know that this was the easy part. The heavy lifting will be getting our spending reductions past a Democrat-controlled Senate and White House, which continue to live in denial of Washington’s spending addiction.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi has refused to even budge from her position of opposing any spending cuts this year. The Democrat Senate leadership and White House have complained they haven’t been given enough time to consider our spending bill.

Facing a March 4th federal government shutdown, last week the House passed a “Continuing Resolution” which keeps the federal government operating another two weeks to allow time for the Senate and White House to act. The “CR” included an additional \$4 billion in spending cuts, a prorated amount of our total cut. As Speaker Boehner has made clear, we will continue to push for spending cuts no matter how long the Democrat leaders of Congress and the president stonewall and delay.

With the nation facing a record high federal budget deficit of over \$1.6 trillion and an astronomical national debt exceeding \$14 trillion, it ought to be clear to people from all political persuasions that our financial house is on fire. Continuing to ignore looming national bankruptcy is not only irresponsible, it is self destructive. For lawmakers, the debate in Washington should not be over whether to have spending cuts, but rather how much can be responsibly cut to help reduce the deficit.

Rest assured, I am committed, along with my House Republican colleagues, to reduce government spending and make government live within its means.



Fairhope Teacher Receives National Award



Fairhope High School science teacher Megan O’Neill was one of 100 teachers nationwide to receive the Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching in late 2010. The only Alabama teacher selected for the White House honor, Ms. O’Neill travelled to Washington, DC to personally receive the award from President Obama. During her trip to the Nation’s Capital, she took time to stop by my office to brief me on local environmental education efforts, including her 10-12 grade aquascience classes. Congratulations to Megan for her outstanding work!

From the mailbox...

Dear Congressman Bonner,

We wanted to express our deepest thanks to all of you for the work you are doing to help our suffering citizens regarding the oil spill aftermath. We so appreciate your intensity, and to quote Mrs. Lee again, “Best way to clear the air is to have it all out in the open” (Atticus Finch). You are certainly doing that for us, and we are so very proud.

*Thanks and God Bless,
A south Alabama constituent*

